



Statement of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group

New York, March 14, 2008

The United States, France, and the Russian Federation, in their capacity as Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, issued the following statement on March 14, 2008 in the United Nations General Assembly regarding their decision to vote against the Resolution on the Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan.

The political-level representatives of France, the Russian Federation, and the United States, as Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict, jointly proposed a set of basic principles for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict to the sides in November 2007 on the margins of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Madrid. These basic principles are founded on the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, including those related to refraining from the threat or use of force, the territorial integrity of the states, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples. The proposal transmitted to the sides in Madrid comprises a balanced package of principles that are currently under negotiation. The sides have agreed that no single element is agreed until all elements are agreed by the parties.

Unfortunately, this draft resolution selectively propagates only certain of these principles to the exclusion of others, without considering the Co-Chairs' proposal in its balanced entirety.

Because of this selective approach, the three OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries must oppose this unilateral draft resolution. They reiterate that a peaceful, equitable, and lasting settlement of the NK conflict will require unavoidable compromises among the parties that reflect the principles of territorial integrity, non-use of force, and equal rights of peoples, as well as other principles of international law.

While the three Minsk Group Co-Chair countries will vote against this unilateral draft resolution, which threatens to undermine the peace process, they reaffirm their support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and thus do not recognize the independence of NK.

At a time when serious clashes have occurred along the Line of Contact with loss of life, both sides must refrain from unilateral and maximalist actions either at the negotiating table or in the field. (end)